

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer generated graphical user interface for accepting user input commands comprising:

a first area containing a plurality of menu items;

a second area that includes an icon selected from a set of icons based on the location of a pointer relative to the menu item;

wherein said menu items comprise at least one section containing only operating system specific menu items and a second section containing only application program specific menu items;

wherein the first and second areas do not overlap; and

wherein the graphical user interface is part of an operating system shell.

2. (Original) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 1 wherein the first area is a start menu.

3. (Original) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 2 wherein the icon is an animated icon.

4. (Previously Presented) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 3 wherein the animated icon appears as hovering over at least a portion of the second area.

5. (Original) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 3 wherein the animated icon is three-dimensional in appearance.

6. (Currently Amended) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 4 [[5]], wherein the hovering icon comprises a three-dimensional appearing object located in the shell namespace.

7. (Original) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 4 wherein the animated icon further appears reflected in the start menu to give a further three-dimensional hovering effect.

8. (Original) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 7 wherein the animated icon appears as rocking from side-to-side.

9. (Currently Amended) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 7 [[8]] wherein the animated icon rotates based on the movement of the pointer ~~point~~.

10. (Original) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 3 wherein the animated icon is contextually related to an item in the start menu over which the pointer is located.

11. (Original) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 10 wherein the contextually related animated icon provides an indication of an action that will occur if the menu item is selected.

12. (Original) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 2 wherein the icon is located immediately adjacent to the start menu.

13. (Currently Amended) A method of providing visual feedback in a graphical user interface having a menu comprising a plurality of displayed menu ~~items~~ items, each menu item being associated with an icon different in appearance from the associated menu item, comprising the steps of:

receiving user input that causes a pointer to be located over a menu item;

in response to the user input, displaying in a distinct area of the graphical user interface the icon associated with that menu item;

wherein the distinct area remains in a fixed position relative to the pointer;

wherein the distinct area does not overlap the menu item; and

wherein the graphical user interface is part of an operating system shell.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the icon is an animated icon.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the menu is a start menu.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15 [[14]] wherein the animated icon is contextually related to its associated menu item in the start menu.

17. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the displaying step further comprises:

an introduction animation element that causes the animated icon to move and flip;

a looping animation; and

an ending animation that changes the icon back to its original appearance.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14 [[13]] wherein the animated icon is a predefined object type in the shell namespace.

19. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium having computer-executable instructions for providing visual feedback in a graphical user interface having a menu comprising a plurality of displayed menu items, each menu item being associated with an icon different from the associated menu item, by performing the steps comprising:

receiving user input that causes a pointer to be located over a menu item,
said menu item comprising at least one section containing only operating system specific menu items and a second section containing only application program specific menu items;

in response to the user input, displaying the icon associated with that menu item in a distinct area of the graphical user interface;

wherein the distinct area does not overlap the menu item;

wherein the graphical user interface is part of an operating system shell.

20. (Previously Presented) The computer readable storage medium of claim 19 wherein the icon is an animated icon.

21. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium of claim 20 [[19]] wherein the menu is a start menu.

22. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium of claim 21 [[19]] wherein the animated icon is contextually related to its associated menu item in the start menu.

23. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium of claim 19 wherein the displaying ~~animating~~ step further comprises:

an introduction animation element that causes the animated icon to move and flip;

a looping animation; and

an ending animation that changes the icon back to its original appearance.

24. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium of claim 20 [[19]] wherein the animated icon is a predefined object type in the shell namespace.

25-29. (Cancelled)

30. (Currently Amended) One or more computer readable storage media storing executable instructions for providing, as part of an operating system shell, a computer generated graphical user interface for accepting user input commands, said graphical user interface comprising:

a pointer for selecting menu items and icons;

a start menu divided into a plurality of discrete sections, at least one of the sections ~~section~~ containing only operating system specific menu items and a second section containing only application program specific menu items;

an animated three-dimensional appearing icon that moves side-to-side so that a user can see the edges rotating, and the icon changes appearance based on the menu item over which the pointer is located, wherein the animated three-dimensional appearing icon is displayed in a different, non-overlapping discrete section from the corresponding menu item; and

wherein the appearance of the animated three-dimensional icon is contextually related to the operating system specific function called by selecting the menu item.

31. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage media of claim 30 wherein the side-to-side movement of the three-dimensional appearing icon is determined ~~determine~~ in real-time in response to a movement of the pointer.